

Microspeak: On-board (verb)

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20080522-00

May 22, 2008



Raymond Chen

Here are a few citations. On a list of activities:

| On-board a new team member.

Presumably they mean *bring* on board. What makes this particularly interesting is that they didn't convert a noun to a verb; they converted a *prepositional phrase* to a verb, demonstrating once again the malleability of the English language. Here's a snippet from a blog post which seems to use the same meaning, but dispensing with the hyphen:

| Over the past 4 weeks, we have been onboarding customers slowly.

On the other hand, there are usages whose intended meaning I can't quite figure out. Some titles from documents I don't have access to:

| How to On-Board Tools on the Extranet
| On-Boarding Kit

And a subsection from an old document:

On-Board Schedule

Milestone	Target Date	Status
Attend a client planning meeting	Dec. 2005	Complete
Frooble analysis		Meeting daily with ABC team to map out migration
On-Board to client dev	Feb. 2006	
Client dev	TBD	
On-Board to client test	TBD	
Client test complete	TBD	
On-Board to DEF	TBD	
DEF sign-off by GHI	TBD	
File migration	TBD	
Go-Live	TBD	

ABC, DEF, and GHI were TLAs I did not understand. Frooble is a made-up word substituting for the actual word in the schedule. (And yes, “Go-Live” is a noun.) As a final example, there is somebody at Microsoft whose official job title is *Senior Onboarding Manager*. If you can figure out what *on-board* means, you’re smarter than me.

Pre-emptive clever comment: Verbing weirds language.

Raymond Chen

Follow

